

Appl. No. 10/013,984
Amdt. Dated September 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2003

•• REMARKS/ARGUMENTS ••

The Official Action of June 5, 2003 has been thoroughly studied. Accordingly, the changes presented herein for the application, considered together with the following remarks, are believed to be sufficient to place the application into condition for allowance.

By the present amendment the limitation of the limited parts of the periphery portion of the openings that are defined by an increased thickness has been referred to as protuberances in order to avoid indefinite phrases noted by the Examiner. The specific changes to the claims are discussed in more detail below.

Entry of the changes to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Under this rejection the Examiner indicated that in claim 1 the phrase "having a generally uniform thickness" is indefinite, because it is unclear how there can be a generally uniform thickness when there are portions of protuberances throughout the nonwoven fabric.

In response to this basis for rejecting the claims, the phrase that the Examiner determined to be indefinite has been canceled.

Appl. No. 10/013,984
Amdt. Dated September 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2003

Also under this rejection the Examiner indicated that in claim 1 the phrase "make portions of said openings protuberated upward from said upper surface" is indefinite, because an opening is a blank space.

In response to this basis for rejecting the claims, the recitation of "portions of said openings protuberated upward from said upper surface" has been changed to "protuberances."

Also under this rejection the Examiner has indicated that in claims 2 and 3 the limitation "said parts of the periphery portions of said plurality of openings" lacks sufficient antecedent basis in the claims.

In response to this basis for rejecting the claims, as indicated above, the phrase "parts of the periphery portions of said plurality of openings" has been changed to "protuberances."

The Examiner has further pointed out that in claim 1 "part" and "portion" are singular.

The Examiner courteously suggested the wording "said part of the periphery portion of said each of said plurality of openings."

The change to "protuberances" is believed to overcome this issue.

With regard to claim 2 the Examiner indicated that the limitation "said parts of the periphery portions of said plurality of opening which are protuberated upward" lacks sufficient antecedent basis in the claims. The Examiner has pointed out that claim 1 states that portions of openings, not parts of the periphery portion of the openings are protuberated.

The change to "protuberances" throughout the claims is believed to overcome this issue.

Appl. No. 10/013,984
Amdt. Dated September 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2003

With regard to claim 4, the Examiner indicated that the limitation "the portion" in line 4 lacks sufficient antecedent basis in the claims.

The change to "protuberances" throughout the claims is believed to overcome this issue.

On page 3 of the Official Action the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-7 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

It is believed that the changes made herein for the claims addresses and overcomes the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and places the application into condition for allowance.

Entry of the changes to the claims and an early allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the Official Action and reconsideration is requested.

The prior art made of record by the Examiner on page 3 of the Official Action has been noted. This prior art is not believed to be particularly pertinent to applicants' claimed invention.

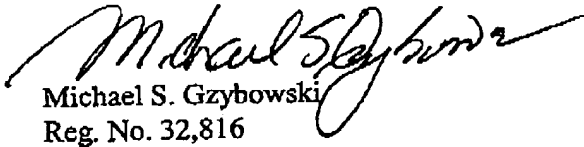
If upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that there remain outstanding issues in the present application that could be resolved; the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' patent counsel at the telephone number given below to discuss such issues.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of

Appl. No. 10/013,984
Amdt. Dated September 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2003

time fees, to Deposit Account No. 12-2136 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,


Michael S. Gzybowski
Reg. No. 32,816

BUTZEL LONG
350 South Main Street
Suite 300
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
(734) 995-3110

OFFICIAL

**RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER**

SEP 05 2003

100485.1